

Massive search for teen skater

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By John Miller
The Tribune

DUBLIN — Police yesterday combed the west end of this city on horseback, on foot and in helicopters for a 13-year-old girl who disappeared Monday afternoon on her way home from school.

At about 2:30 p.m., Ilene Misheloff, a prizewinning ice skater, left Wells School, where she and

her twin brother, Brian, are eighth-graders. She planned to go home and change clothes for an ice-skating lesson at nearby Dublin Iceland. She never arrived home.

Police Chief Jim Rose said he has assigned nearly every officer in his 27-person department to help in the search. The FBI and area police departments have been alerted.

Members of the Alameda County Sheriff's Department Mounted Posse scoured the gently rolling hills west of Dublin yesterday as helicopters hovered overhead. Officers also pushed through the bushes along creekbeds and scanned canals that crisscross this community of about 22,000 people.

The search is to continue today.

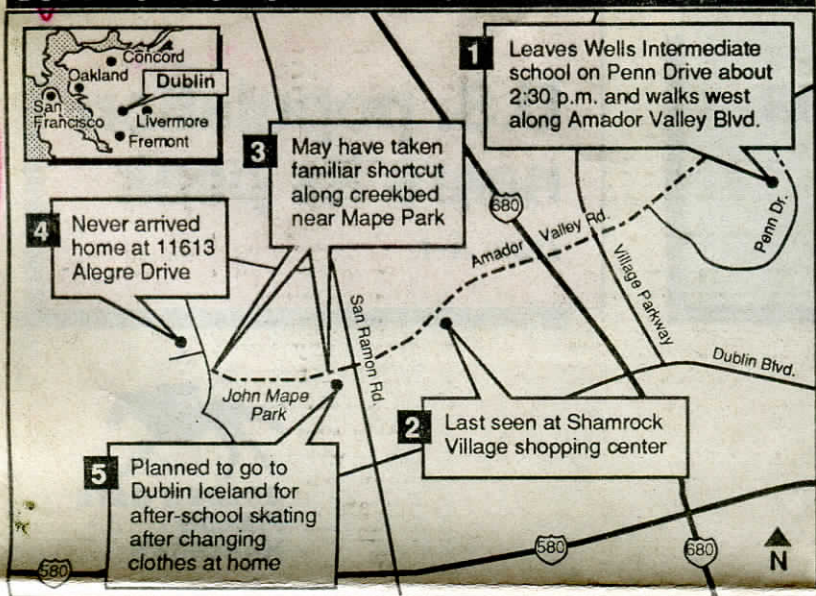
Rose said police are worried because there doesn't appear to be any reason for Ilene to have run away.

"Everything (at home) seems to be pretty normal," Rose said. "She comes from a very stable family life and school. There is no indication of poor behavior."

He said Ilene is 5 feet 3 inches

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DUBLIN GIRL'S DISAPPEARANCE



By Steve Kearsley / The Tribune

Dublin ice skater drops out of sight after school

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tall, weighs about 115 pounds, has shoulder-length curly brown hair and brown eyes, and wears braces.

She was wearing a gray sweater with a gray-and-pink skirt and black low-top Keds sneakers and was carrying a blue backpack when she disappeared.

Rose said Ilene was last seen by classmates walking alone on busy Amador Valley Boulevard about 3:30 p.m. She had left Wells Intermediate School on Penn Drive and walked west along Amador Valley Boulevard, crossing under Interstate 680, toward San Ramon Road. She was last seen by friends as she walked near the Goodwill store in the Shamrock shopping center, just west of the freeway.

She then would have crossed San Ramon Road and followed a creek to near the rear of Nielsen School, where she would have exited on Amarillo Street for the final block to Alegre Drive.

Her parents reported her missing about 6:30 p.m. when she failed to come home or show up at the ice rink for her private skating lesson.

The rink is the same one

HOW TO HELP

- Anyone with information on Ilene Misheloff's disappearance should call Dublin police at 829-0566.

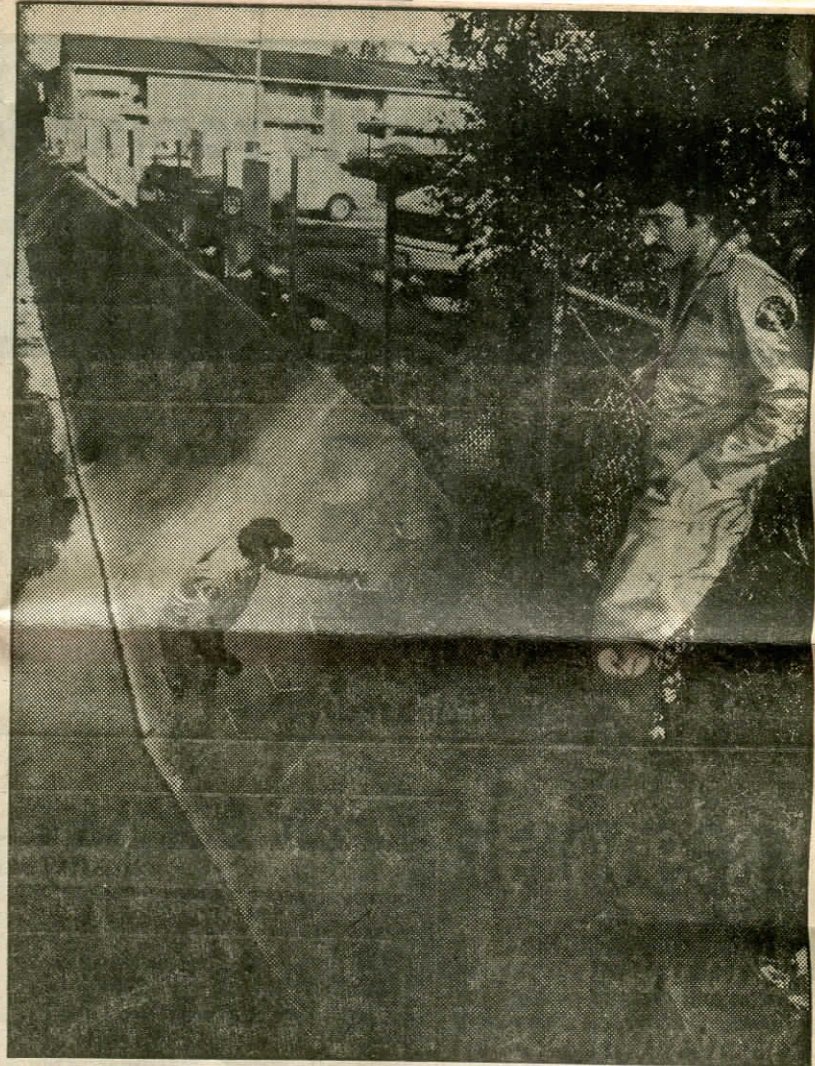
where the 1988 Olympic figure skating champion Brian Boitano trains.

Barry Keats, who manages the rink, said all the skating students are in a state of shock over Ilene's disappearance.

"They're all very upset," Keats said. "She was a very promising skater, above average. She is very shy, but likable and responsible. This (disappearance) is out of character for her."

Her distraught parents, Michael and Madelyne Misheloff, said yesterday there was no reason for Ilene to simply run away.

"It would be so out of character for her," said her father, his eyes red. An engineer for a Silicon Valley firm, he was interviewed in the dining room of their comfortable two-story house. "And she would never get into a car with a stranger."



By Reginald Pearman/The Tribune

Rescue personnel search for Ilene Misheloff in a canal in Dublin.

Her mother said Ilene normally walked home for a snack and to change clothes before going to the skating rink. But Monday, "she never made it home."

The mother went on television last night to let Ilene know "we love her and we want her back. I just want her back."

Chief Rose wasted no time throwing every available officer into the search for Ilene, explaining "we don't have a high crime rate here and we want to be as pro-active as possible, rather than just react."

Most of the Dublin Police Department officers are actually members of the Alameda County Sheriff's Department who work under contract to the city. Joining them in the search are more than a dozen regular sheriff's officers, including four on horseback.

Rose said there "doesn't seem to be any association" between Ilene's disappearance and the

kidnapping of Michaela Joy Garecht, 9, of Hayward. She was kidnapped in front of a food store last November in Hayward.

Rose said he would have acted as swiftly as he had even in the absence of the Garecht case.

"Our response would be the same," he said.

Ilene was a competitive skater who took first place in the 1987 Redwood Empire Classic, held at a skating rink owned by "Peanuts" cartoonist Charles Schulz in Santa Rosa.

Her father said Ilene had not discussed possible Olympic competition. "She just loved it and wanted to go as far as possible," he said, glancing toward a photograph showing his daughter standing on a winner's platform following a skating contest.

The Misheloffs have been Dublin residents for 11 years, and have lived on Alegre Drive for the past two years.



Ilene Misheloff

Disappears after school